

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1-17 (cancelled)

Claim 18 (previously presented):

A locking fastener assembly, comprising:

- a) a fastener nut and a fastener washer rotatable relative to each other about a common axis;
- b) an annular washer bearing surface on said nut and an annular nut bearing surface on said washer, said annular bearing surfaces being axially opposed to each other;
- c) each of said annular bearing surfaces having a plurality of inclined bearing faces oriented circumferentially and forming portions of an undulating annular bearing surface;
- d) said inclined bearing faces being opposed to each other on respective nut and washer and being curved both radially and circumferentially of said assembly and complementary to each other; and
- e) a clamping surface on said washer.

Claim 19 (previously presented):

The locking fastener assembly of Claim 18 further characterized in that:

- a) said inclined bearing faces which are opposed to each other on respective nut and washer are spherically convex and concave, respectively, on substantially identical radii from substantially the same center.

Claim 20 (currently amended):

A locking fastener assembly, comprising:

- a) an internally threaded fastener nut, including a fastener body having an annular skirt depending therefrom;
- b) a fastener washer including ~~an~~ an annular washer body having a flange extending radially outwardly therefrom;

- c) said annular skirt extending loosely through said washer whereby said nut is freely rotatable relative to said washer before said fastener assembly is mounted;
- d) an annular washer bearing surface on said nut body and an annular nut bearing surface on said washer body;
- e) said washer bearing surface on said nut body being convex and including a series of shallow peaks and valleys extending around said nut body so as to create undulations including annularly inclined bearing faces;
- f) said nut bearing surface on said washer body being concave and including a series of shallow peaks and valleys extending around said washer body so as to create undulations including annularly inclined bearing faces;
- g) said flange having an annular clamping surface thereon and being capable of flexing slightly axially of said washer body; and
- h) said inclined bearing faces each being ~~somewhat~~ generally spherical in shape and complementary to each other when seated in locking relationship against each other.

Claim 21 (currently amended):

A locking fastener assembly, comprising:

- a) a fastener nut and a fastener washer connected to each other in such a manner that they can be rotated relative to each other about a common axis;
- b) an annular washer bearing surface on said nut and an annular nut bearing surface on said washer, said annular bearing surfaces being axially opposed to each other;
- c) each of said annular bearing surfaces including a plurality of inclined bearing faces oriented circumferentially and forming ~~what~~ approximates an undulating annular bearing surface;
- d) one of said annular bearing surfaces having plateaus between alternating pairs of adjacent inclined bearing faces;

- e) the other of said annular bearing surfaces having valley floors between alternating pairs of adjacent inclined bearing faces; and
- f) said plateaus and floors being segmentally spherical about a common center when said assembly is in locking relationship.

Claim 22 (previously presented):

A locking fastener assembly, comprising:

- a) a fastener nut and a fastener washer rotatable relative to each other about a common axis;
- b) an annular washer bearing surface on said nut and an annular nut bearing surface on said washer, said annular bearing surfaces being axially opposed to each other;
- c) each of said annular bearing surfaces having a plurality of inclined bearing faces oriented circumferentially and forming portions of an undulating annular bearing surface;
- d) a clamping surface on said washer;
- e) said washer including a washer body and a flange extending radially outwardly from said washer body;
- f) at least a portion of said clamping surface being formed on said washer flange;
- g) said washer flange comprising a series of flange segments extending annularly around said washer body;
- h) said flange segments being slightly flexible axially of said washer; and
- i) said flange segments being separated by radial slots in said flanges.

Claim 23 (previously presented):

The locking fastener assembly of Claim 22 further characterized in that:

- a) said clamping surface has a generally vee-shaped depression formed therein substantially in radial alignment with each of said slots.

Claim 24 (previously presented):

A combination of an axle assembly including a spindle, a bearing assembly seated on said spindle and a locking fastener assembly retaining said bearing assembly on said spindle, comprising:

- a) external threads on said spindle;
- b) a fastener nut, including a fastener body having an annular skirt depending therefrom, said nut having internal threads therein;
- c) a fastener washer including an annular washer body having a flange extending radially outwardly therefrom;
- d) said annular skirt extending loosely through said washer whereby said nut is freely rotatable relative to said washer before said fastener assembly is mounted on said spindle;
- e) an annular washer bearing surface on said nut body and an annular nut bearing surface on said washer body;
- f) said washer bearing surface on said nut body being convex and including a series of shallow peaks and valleys extending around said nut body so as to create undulations including annularly inclined bearing faces;
- g) said nut bearing surface on said washer body being concave and including a series of shallow peaks and valleys extending around said washer body so as to create undulations with annularly inclined bearing faces;
- h) said flange having an annular clamping surface thereon and being capable of flexing slightly axially of said washer body;
- i) the height of the peaks in one of said washer bearing surface and said nut bearing surface being greater than the height of the peaks in the other of said washer bearing surface and said nut bearing surface; and
- j) said height of the peaks in one of said washer bearing surface and said nut bearing surface also being greater than the clearance between said threads when said locking assembly is threaded onto said spindle to lock said bearing assembly on said spindle.

Claim 25 (new):

A locking fastener assembly, comprising:

- a) a fastener nut and a fastener washer rotatable relative to each other about a common axis;
- b) an annular washer bearing surface on said nut and an annular nut bearing surface on said washer, said annular bearing surfaces being axially opposed to each other;
- c) each of said annular bearing surfaces provided with a generally spherically curved shape and a plurality of inclined bearing faces that form an undulating surface located at least partially around each of said annular surfaces, said inclined bearing faces being opposed to each other on respective nut and washer; and
- e) a clamping surface on said washer.

Claim 26 (new):

The locking fastener assembly of Claim 25 further characterized in that:

- a) the annular bearing surface on the fastener nut is provided with a spherically curved shape that is generally convex and the annular bearing surface on the fastener washer is provided with a spherically curved shape that is generally concave.